

**Southern Methodist University**  
**SMU Scholar**

---

Hilltopics

University Honors Program

---

1-23-2006

# Hilltopics: Volume 2, Issue 15

Hilltopics Staff

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.smu.edu/hilltopics>

---

## Recommended Citation

Hilltopics Staff, "Hilltopics: Volume 2, Issue 15" (2006). *Hilltopics*. 35.  
<https://scholar.smu.edu/hilltopics/35>

This document is brought to you for free and open access by the University Honors Program at SMU Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Hilltopics by an authorized administrator of SMU Scholar. For more information, please visit <http://digitalrepository.smu.edu>.

# HILLTOPICS

always 100% smu-written  
visit us at [www.smu.edu/honors/hilltopics](http://www.smu.edu/honors/hilltopics)

volume two, issue fifteen  
week of january 23, 2006

## Alcohol violations on campus: The time has come for SMU to relax the rules and have a little fun

by Mark McDowell

Every morning before going to class, I read the police reports—one of the more entertaining sections I have found in the *Daily Campus*. They range from alcohol violations to theft to dead chickens at the Pike house. What's interesting is that these reports usually involve some careless, drunk freshman or some rowdy fraternity.

I'm sure the campus police patrol would love to not have to write any more of these, but as long as there are college kids and alcohol, I don't see any end in sight to these situations. The school does its best to curb this continuing problem, if you call it a problem. Just about everyone on campus gets an alcohol violation at some point, and there are whole lists of rules that apply to AARO, Mustang Corral, and fraternities. First-years who get two or more alcohol violations are ineligible to rush into a fraternity or sorority. Also during rush week, if anyone at all is caught drinking under age, they are automatically ineligible from joining a fraternity. These are logical deterrents to stop drinking before it starts.

Unfortunately, there are problems that come with these punishments. For example, people have off-campus parties to avoid campus police. Clearly, this is a problem because these students will have to get back to their rooms somehow, and drunk driving happens in these cases way too often. Also, it makes people afraid to call EMS when there is a medical problem due to drinking, since the police will definitely hand out violations when they arrive. Students should not be afraid to call medical personnel when someone's life is on the line. Last year, when one of my friends got sick from drinking too much

as a freshman, someone else called an ambulance to check on him. The intentions were good, but the sick student was fine and ended up with a violation. He made people around him swear never to call an ambulance again so that he would not get disqualified from rush.

Years ago, there were not punishments this severe for alcohol violations. I can't say it was safer to live 40 years ago on a college campus, but our parents' generation probably had less stress and fewer drunk driving accidents because they drank where they lived.

Having more restrictions and laws comes with a price. Remember what you heard about prohibition back in the early 20th century? Drinking rose due to the new laws, and black markets emerged for alcohol. The attempt to make a sober America totally backfired when things like illegal moonshine made people go blind.

SMU needs to re-evaluate its stance on alcohol. The punishments need to be less severe. I feel the benefits that come with relaxing the rules outweigh the potential risk. Remember what the Boulevard used to be? Those were the legendary days when SMU spirit was at its peak. That was when the whole university came out and had fun together. Starting this year, I bet Boulevard attendance was at its lowest due to all the new rules and regulations. Fraternities have been going to bars instead of going to the Boulevard.

Everyone says that these should be the best four years of your life. I want everyone to be safe, but I still want people to have fun in college.

*Mark McDowell is a sophomore accounting and economics major.*



## INSIDE this issue

**Movies:** *Brokeback Mountain* is much, much more than a "gay cowboy movie." Page 2.

**World:** From Liberia to Washington, DC women are taking control, page 2.

**Life:** The honeymoon from hell: Snowboarding, safety, and you. Page 3.

**Sports:** The Steelers will win Super Bowl XL or Douglas Hill will eat his shoe, page 4.

**Be Heard:** Got an opinion? *Hilltopics* is always looking for good submissions and interesting feedback. Email your thoughts to [hilltopics@hotmail.com](mailto:hilltopics@hotmail.com).

We welcome submissions from all members of the SMU community. Letters to the editor should be up to 300 words in response to a previously published article. Contributions should be articles of up to 300–600 words on any topic or in response to another article. Please email your submission to [hilltopics@hotmail.com](mailto:hilltopics@hotmail.com) by Wednesday at 8:00 PM to be included in the following week's publication. Special deadlines will be observed for breaking campus events. The opinions expressed in *Hilltopics* are those of the authors solely and do not reflect the beliefs of *Hilltopics* or any other entity. As such, *Hilltopics* does not publish anonymous articles.

## ***Brokeback Mountain* admirably engages mainstream actors in support of same-sex intimacies**

by Rebekah Hurt

*Brokeback Mountain* is a movie not to be missed. Starring Heath Ledger, Jake Gyllenhaal, Anne Hathaway, and Michelle Williams, *Brokeback* tells the complicated and passion filled story of two cowboys who meet up in the course of herding sheep on Brokeback Mountain in Wyoming as young men and who embark on a lifelong, long-distance, on-and-off intimate relationship which each must balance against his own heterosexual marriage (Gyllenhaal to Hathaway and Ledger to Williams) and which must be constantly shielded by both against the bigotry and lack of understanding directed by society at large toward same-sex partnerships.

Roger Ebert writes, "*Brokeback Mountain* has been described as 'a gay cowboy movie,' which is a cruel simplification. It is the story of a time and place where two men are forced to deny the only great passion either one will ever feel. Their tragedy is universal. It could be about two women, or lovers from different religious or ethnic groups -- any 'forbidden' love." I could not agree more heartily that what the movie supports is not strictly a greater tolerance for gay rights as such, but, rather, a renegotiation of all societal restrictions that aim to prevent people from loving other people on account of their simple personhood.

The real brilliance of the film is that we are never beaten over the head with any heavy-handed moral or such. That is not to say that the political import of the film is not present; I mean, instead, to suggest that the artistic quality of the movie is never compromised or subsumed by attention to its incredibly important social message. In fact, if anything, the power of the film's political commitments is enhanced by its unwavering focus on the characters and their development as multifaceted individuals progressing through several decades of American history localized in Texas and the Midwest. As Ebert states, "The movie wisely never steps back to look at the larger picture, or deliver the 'message.' It is specifically the story of these men, this love. It stays in close-up. That's how Jack [Gyllenhaal] and Ennis

[Ledger] see it."

Ang Lee's direction is nothing short of stunning. We are presented with amazingly intense and graphic sex scenes between the very attractive Ledger and Gyllenhaal which are counterbalanced by the film's several haunting images of gay hate crimes in progress and of their victims. Indeed, one of the great tactics of the film is to leave us wondering at the conclusion whether a scene wherein Jake is beaten unconscious on the side of the highway is a reality or merely (if one can use "merely" in this instance) a representation of Ennis' fears for his lover, harkening back to an earlier scene where Ennis has explained his childhood education in the dangers of queer love, telling Jack, "There were two old guys shackled up together. They were the joke of the town, even though they were pretty tough old birds. One day they were found beaten to death...He was dragged behind the pickup truck by his dick until it fell off... My dad, he made sure me and my brother saw it. For all I know, he did it." In any case, the unconscionable nature of such "instructional" traditions - which, unfortunately, exist still today - is made unshakably, undeniably clear.

On a slightly more trivial note, our students will appreciate the cameo appearance of a female character portraying the stereotypical 1970s/80s SMU-grad...a stereotype which, in most regards, still resonates today. I laughed heartily at its accuracy, anyway, even if the locally-colored humor was lost on my fellow Boston theater goers at the time.

In Dallas, *Brokeback Mountain* is currently playing at the Magnolia Theater at 3699 E. McKinney Ave. 75204, just south of campus on McKinney between Lemmon and 75. For more information on show-times, etc. visit:

<http://www.landmarktheatres.com/market/Dallas/The-Magnolia.htm>

See this movie with someone you care about or as an excellent group discussion starter: you won't be disappointed!

Rebekah Hurt is a senior English major.

## **A new generation of female politicians is spicing up world affairs and advancing women's rights**

by Courtney Hebb

People of the world! It's time to spice up your life, because girl power is surging back, and there is a new group of Spice Girls leading the way. These ladies may not sing or dance or wear tight skirts, but what they do have is power. Basically, they like totally, like, rule, literally. These women are making the headlines and headway as they show the world that females can govern more than just households.

Baby Spice: Tzipi Livni, youngest at 47, was recently appointed Israel's new foreign minister replacing Silvan Shalom. Continuing to also serve as minister of justice, Livni also received the Abirat ha-SHilton (Quality of Governance) award in 2004. There has only been one other female foreign minister and that was Gold Meir who went on to become prime minister. If history serves as any indication, I think we can expect great things for the baby of this group.

Posh Spice: Angela Merkel is Germany's first woman chancellor, after her narrow win last September to Schroeder. Originally a scientist (she holds a doctorate in physics), Merkel got involved in the newly democratic government after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Merkel has been the chair of the Christian Democratic Union since 2000 and is often

compared to the subjectively posh Margaret Thatcher.

Sporty Spice: Don't underestimate this grandma. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf is the newly inaugurated President of Liberia and one tough woman. Often referred to as the "Iron Lady," her political career has spanned almost 30 years inspired by her iron will and determination. She was imprisoned in the 1980's for criticizing the military regime of Samuel Doe and has twice gone into exile. Johnson-Sirleaf faces extreme challenges in healing this war-torn country and wants "to bring motherly sensitivity and emotion to the presidency" in addition to a commitment to fight against corruption. Since the end of Liberia's civil war in 2003, she has headed the Governance Reform Commission.

Ginger: Traveling to Latin America is a great way to spice up any life, and Michelle Bachelet shows the world why Chile is a hot spot for politics. A woman, a single mom, and a socialist, Bachelet has recently been elected as a president of a country where only 4% of senators are women and legal divorce was introduced last year. She is the former Defense Minister and the first female in a Latin American country to

see WOMEN on page 4



## Snowboarding: A beginner's guide to the good, the bad, and the ugly aspects of a strange sport

by Rebekah Hurt

When my husband-to-be in Boston suggested some months ago that we spend our honeymoon this January snowboarding in the Vermont-New Hampshire-Maine area, I thought, "fantastic!" I had, admittedly, never skied or snowboarded in my life at this point...nor had I really had much of *any* contact with the white stuff since moving away from snow country as a kindergartner, but thought I would be a fast enough learner. When I asked Matt (that's my husband) what boarding would be like, he, being the expert, responded with a question in turn: Had I ever tried skateboarding? Well, no, I said, I was never able to get too into skateboarding on account of my extreme fear of asphalt, concrete, in short, the extraordinarily hard pavement that I knew I would inevitably wind up with faces-full of. But *this* would be entirely different; I'd have nothing to fear, because snow is so *soft*, right? He laughed. This should have been my first clue that my fantasy-shredding vacation might not turn out exactly as I'd been optimistically imagining it.

Two weeks, one trip to a backwoods New Hampshire ER, dozens of x-rays, a lovely neck brace, and a *whoole* lot of pain medication later, I think I'm now qualified to speak as something of an expert on the stupidity of this perilous pastime. In many ways, I was doomed from the moment I strapped myself onto the board. First of all, I am *extremely* blind and haven't worn contact lenses for years. So, after the humiliating experience of trying to get onto the chair lift ("Do you want me to slow it down a little bit?" the operator, on sight of me, asks my husband, who replies, "Well, I think you'd better slow it down a *lot*.") And after the shock of finding, at the top of the lift, not a nice flat surface to scoot off across in order to move my free foot from the "stomp pad" to the second binding but, instead, a *plunging* drop of a slope that prompted me to grasp desperately to: 1) the departing chair and 2) my stumbling husband, ineffectually, before falling head over feet backwards down the hill about twenty yards; it became painfully apparent to me that there was no way my glasses were going to stay on my face. So I proceeded down the mountain with only a vague sense of the difference between snow and not-snow, or, as this "not-snow" is more problematically identified: trees.

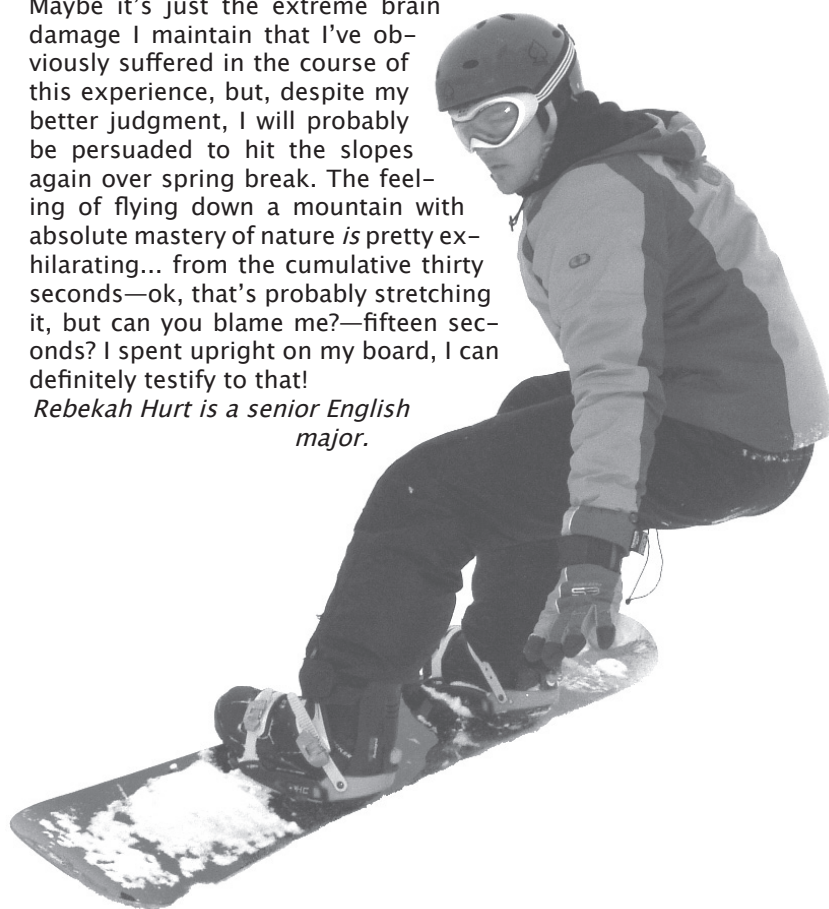
I went through several phases of trying to rationalize the insane process of hauling one's self up a mountain only to tumble down its other side to myself, first, as a kind of psycho-spiritual exercise and, secondly, as a form of extreme marriage counseling. For a while these illusions entertained me and kept me crawling back to my feet. Each time I was forced to seal-crawl back into the middle of the run, to poise myself on toe-tips and hands getting ready to spring back up to the standing position, I would take a brief moment to catch my breath and attempt to "center" myself, to achieve that clarity and singularity of purpose that is awarded to only the most dedicated of Zen masters. *And one, two, three... UP!* I would coach myself with every thrust off of the frozen ground before I went careening down the run with no particular direction (none at first, anyway, I did improve some, I swear!). You see, snowboarding is very much about balance and about overcoming your body's intuitive responses to instability. The key, I'm told, is to balance between "toe-ing" and "heel-ing" in such a way that you steer a middle course. I was an instant master of this toe-ing business, but the

heel-ing... not so much. As I continued somersaulting down the mountain in what were probably some of the world's greatest wipe-outs ever seen, screaming obscenities, sporadically bursting into tears, alternately begging Matt to take me home and, then, demanding that he not let me leave a particular position until I'd mastered the skill under instruction, I tried to explain to my husband the complex psycho-intellectual factors that were inhibiting my athletic success. "It's not that you *can't* do it; it's that you *refuse* to do it!" my husband kept on reminding me in what I'm sure he imagined to be an encouraging manner.

By three hours later and after, among my hundreds of falls, three extremely brutal slams to my lower back, I was ready to surrender. I imagine, perhaps unfairly, that in the dark reaches of his heart, my husband was deriving some slight amusement and satisfaction from seeing his know-it-all wife finally struggling at something. So, on that account, I feel a little less bad about cutting short his own opportunities for further shredding fun. Anyhow, in classic form, I spent the first evening of my honeymoon laid up in the Dartmouth medical center in one of those really fashionable paper gowns with my head, neck, and back entirely immobilized...with my husband laughing (albeit supportively) from the foot of the bed, taking digital camera footage of the entire incident for posterity. (For some comic relief, visit my Facebook photo album.) And, you know what? I'm still hurting.

Yet...my bitterness at having been so utterly laid-smack-to by this sport notwithstanding, I must confess that something of its attraction *does*, inexplicably, remain for me. Maybe it's just the extreme brain damage I maintain that I've obviously suffered in the course of this experience, but, despite my better judgment, I will probably be persuaded to hit the slopes again over spring break. The feeling of flying down a mountain with absolute mastery of nature *is* pretty exhilarating... from the cumulative thirty seconds—ok, that's probably stretching it, but can you blame me?—fifteen seconds? I spent upright on my board, I can definitely testify to that!

Rebekah Hurt is a senior English major.



## Seattle Seahawks earn their first Super Bowl birth, but have little chance against Steelers

by Douglas Hill

I'll be honest: if someone had told me a few months ago that the Pittsburgh Steelers and Seattle Seahawks would be playing in Super Bowl XL, I would have been disappointed. The Steelers were at one point 7-5, having just dropped three straight games and looked likely to miss the playoffs. The Seahawks, meanwhile, play in the pathetic NFC west and hadn't won a playoff game in my lifetime. Even at the beginning of the playoffs, I would have had trouble getting excited about a Super Bowl featuring a first seed and a sixth seed. Who cares, right?

That's the beauty of the NFL; after just a few games, the entire picture has changed. The Steelers have done something no team in NFL history has done by going on the road and upsetting the first-, second-, and third-ranked teams in their conference on the way to the Super Bowl. Detroit, and the Seahawks feature NFL MVP Shaun Alexander and a defense that essentially shut down the explosive Panthers' offense on Sunday.

But even with impressive performances by both teams on Sunday and throughout these playoffs, Super Bowl XL is unlikely to live up to its extra large hype. I hate to spoil it for you now, but Pittsburgh is going to win. By a lot.

Seattle is playing very good football, but the Steelers are putting up much more impressive wins. The Seahawks beat a decent Carolina team, but they did so at home, and injuries in the backfield forced the Panthers to rely on third-string running back Nick Goings, who also got hurt Sunday. These injuries forced the Panthers to pin all of their offensive hopes on the passing duo of Jake Delhomme and Steve Smith. Seattle's solution: quadruple cover Smith, and it worked. No receiver can consistently beat four defensive backs, and no offense can be consistently productive if it only has one

threat. These truths were painfully evident for Panthers fans on Sunday as Delhomme completed just fifteen passes but threw three interceptions. Meanwhile, in Denver, the Steelers dominated a great (and healthy) Broncos team that had snagged the second seed in the AFC out of the competitive West division, and they did so in one of the toughest road environments in football. Seattle is in the Super Bowl because Carolina lost; Pittsburgh is in it because they won.

It's not just last week's games, though, that point toward a Steelers route. Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger is playing nearly perfect football this postseason, completing over 65 percent of his passes and boasting a quarterback rating of 124.7. On the other side of the ball, Troy Polamalu, Joey Porter, and Larry Foote have played shut-down defense on the road this postseason, winning against powerful offenses in Cincinnati, Indianapolis, and Denver.

Seattle, on the other hand, runs an offense that is heavily reliant on Alexander, and because of a concussion suffered against Washington, any strong hit to the head should keep him on the sidelines. On defense, it will be a major test of Seattle's sixteenth-ranked squad against a Pittsburgh offense that's running on all cylinders right now.

They call the NFL playoffs a second season, and that's because nothing else matters if you can win three or four games in the playoffs. Winning in the NFL playoffs seems to be a matter of peaking at the right time, not having the best team over the course of a year. Seattle put up a better record than the Steelers this regular season, and they were rewarded with an easy road to Detroit, but the regular season doesn't matter now, and I'm afraid the road out of Detroit won't be nearly as easy.

*Douglas Hill is a junior international studies major.*

## Women in politics take control of important and powerful offices worldwide—from Israel to Germany to Liberia to Chile to the United States continued from page 2

hold this post. She plans on having half of her cabinet women.

Scary Spice: In the States, if you are republican it is Hillary Clinton and if you are a democrat it is Condoleezza Rice. For me, they are both pretty scary. Not that I have anything against brilliant and strong women, but coupled with raw ambition, they become frightening, regardless of gender. Both are potential candidates for the 2008 presidential election and may even duel each other for the most powerful position in the world, reigning supreme as The Ultimate Scary Spice.

So these ladies' hair will turn platinum before a record does, but they are set to change the world, proving that women have a place in politics. *So I'll tell you what I want, what I really really want.../If you wanna be my leader, you gotta beat all the men/Make it last forever, or 'til your term will end/If you wanna be my leader, you have got to win/Coup d'etat's too easy, democracy's the way in!* So summon up your best British accent and join me in saying, "Girl Power." Peace.

*Courtney Hebb is a senior marketing and political science major.*

### Hilltopics Staff

Michael Hogenmiller: Editor-in-Chief  
Yasmin Awad: Managing Editor  
James Longhofer: Business Manager  
Rebekah Hurt: Director of Administration  
Mark McDowell: Advertising Manager  
Kasi DeLaPorte: Copy Editor  
Amanda Wall: Copy Editor  
Douglas Hill: Graphics Editor  
Courtney Hebb: Senior Writer

*Hilltopics* is a weekly publication, published Mondays. It is sponsored by the University Honors Program.

### Are you boring?

(if so, ignore this ad)

We're always looking for interesting submissions.

*Send your commentary, proposal, letter, editorial or cartoon to [hilltopics@hotmail.com](mailto:hilltopics@hotmail.com).*

All pieces become property of *Hilltopics* upon submission.